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Karen M. Morin, Bucknell University

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Surveying Britain’s Informal Empire: Rose Kingsley’s 1872 Reconnaissance for the Mexican National Railway

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The cry which is now heard throughout the length and breadth of the country is, ‘Give us peace and railroads. By the first, we gain security for the development of our noble country. By the latter we render that peace more secure, by the increase of power which would be given to the existing government; and further, they would give us a ready market for the increased production of our land.’

Rose Kingsley, a member of the prominent clerical and literary Kingsley family in England, traveled to Mexico in 1872 as part of a reconnaissance team for the Mexican National Railway, headed by the American railroad promoter William J. Palmer. Kingsley detailed her participation in this reconnaissance trip in her travelogue, South by West or Winter in the Rocky Mountains and Spring in Mexico (1874). The lasting impact of such reconnaissance trips cannot be understated. Six-hundred-forty kilometers of Mexican railroad had been completed under the governments of Maximilian, Juarez, and Lerdo (spanning the years 1862-1876), consisting almost exclusively of the British-owned Mexican Railway between Mexico City and Veracruz. During the Diaz years (1876-1911) following Kingsley’s travels, 20,000 kilometers of railway were added, through the native political elite’s support for reconnaissance missions such as Palmer’s and through financing by U.S., British, and Dutch entrepreneurs.

Throughout South by West Kingsley made many references to Mexico’s need for a railroad, as well as the need for opening a trade route from Mexico to the United States. As summarized in the above epigraph, Kingsley valorized her journey by claiming that the railroad would bring peace to the country, saving Mexico from its two main problems — the "inertia of the people" and political disturbances. Contact with other
nationalities through the railway would "stimulate the Mexican to action" and the country could thus "regenerate" itself.\textsuperscript{5}

What follows is my reading of Rose Kingsley's account of her participation in the development of the Mexican National Railway. It is first an effort to draw attention to Britain's "informal empire" in Mexico, and to situate Kingsley as part of the British and American capitalist vanguard there. This requires an acknowledgment of the classed, gendered, and racialized structure of capitalist development abroad, and its implications for women's travel and the production of imperial travel writing. Thus my second goal for the paper is to explore ways in which Rose Kingsley's writing about Mexico engaged the narrative rhetorics of capitalist development in Mexico by inscribing herself in the text as both a bourgeois rational capitalist and a genteel, English "lady."

Little scholarly attention on imperial discourse and representation has been paid to Britain's "informal" empire in Mexico. While a small but significant number of scholars have taken up critical studies of mid- to late-nineteenth-century British travel writings about the countries of South America,\textsuperscript{6} similar efforts (in English) do not address British travel writing about Mexico during the same period. The cultural theorist Robert Young asserts that in Britain, work on Latin America tends to function distinctly from much of colonial discourse analysis largely because it was not an area where the English have played any great historical role. Therefore, according to Young, it tends to remain the preserve of Latin Americanists within Hispanic studies.\textsuperscript{7}

Young's line of thinking raises striking questions. Nineteenth-century Latin America could be considered part of Britain's informal empire, a relationship greatly stimulated by independence movements that ended the Spanish mercantilist system.\textsuperscript{8} Latin America became a major field for British financial investments, and the recipient of large quantities of Britain's cheap manufactured goods, much of it from the unofficial "black market." Latin America, in turn, supplied raw materials and foodstuffs to Britain. British investments gained momentum in the second half of the century in the form of loans to build railways and roads, modernize ports and mines, and develop new industries. Thus, British companies with investments in Latin America burgeoned suddenly on the London Stock Exchange. In Mexico, British interests initially centered on revitalizing the mines abandoned during independence,\textsuperscript{9} with gold and silver exports accounting for 90 percent of the exchange for manufactured goods. British investors also played an instrumental role in establishing Mexican banking, textiles, manufacturing, and railroad transportation. Financiers such as the London Bank dominated the commercial houses with remarkable impact. Opening its first branch in Mexico City in 1864, the London Bank introduced the circulation of bank notes in Mexico.\textsuperscript{10}
British travel to Mexico and travel writing about Mexico was largely stimulated by investment opportunities in mining in the early part of the nineteenth century, followed by the commercial interests noted above, especially the building of the Mexican rail lines. Much of the British travel literature throughout the century reads as advance scouting for these capital interests. A search through catalogs of British travel texts on Mexico during the period reveals a significant number of titles in English. These accounts attest to the diplomatic, military, and especially the commercial presence of the British in Mexico after independence.\textsuperscript{11} Clearly British investors and industrialists made significant "contributions" toward the management of Mexican resources and its national economy. Thus, I would call attention to the need to expand our interpretations of British colonial discourses into the arena of the informal, non-colonized territories of the empire, perhaps referring instead to the discourses and rhetoric produced out of such relationships as "imperialist" or "neo-imperialist."

\textbf{Situating Kingsley's \textit{South by West}}

Over her lifetime, Rose Kingsley would write books on French art, rose cultivation, and English history.\textsuperscript{12} At an early stage in her writing career, however, she narrated personal experience in the travelogue \textit{South by West}. Rose Kingsley came to North America in the autumn of 1871, unmarried and twenty-six years old, accompanying the Dean of Chester as a representative of the Episcopal Church of England to a convention in Baltimore. Her father, the Reverend Charles Kingsley, was an accomplished English novelist and social commentator.\textsuperscript{13} \textit{South by West}, written as letters — probably to her father and mother — and as journal entries, began after the convention when Rose rode the transcontinental railway across the United States to visit her brother Maurice who worked for the Denver & Rio Grande Railway in Colorado Springs, Colorado.\textsuperscript{14}

While in Colorado, Rose was invited to join her friends whom she referred to as "General and Mrs. P" on the General's "important business" in Mexico.\textsuperscript{15} Though she does not say so, the General was the U.S. railroad entrepreneur William Jackson Palmer, founder of the Denver & Rio Grande and the Mexican National Railway companies. The business involved a reconnaissance trip through Mexico for the Mexican National Railway. In March of 1872 the threesome traveled by steamship from San Francisco to Manzanillo, on the Pacific Coast of Mexico, and then crossed the width of central Mexico to Veracruz on the Gulf of Mexico. From Manzanillo, they traveled by stagecoach through Colima, Guadalajara, Queretaro and Mexico City, and then traveled by train from Mexico City to Veracruz. Her brother, Maurice, and a party of engineers took the overland route from the United States to explore the more northern portions of
the proposed rail route and eventually met up with Rose's party in Queretaro and Mexico City.

As head of Kingsley's expedition, General Palmer's American and British connections made his, and therefore Rose's, journey an especially blended version of an advance guard for American and British capital in Mexico. Palmer was an American educated in England. He learned about narrow gauge railway technology in England from the engineer George Stevenson, and, after an apprenticeship with the Pennsylvania railroad, became the first to build a railroad using that technology in the United States. Being well adapted to the mountain terrain of Colorado, the technology proved particularly appropriate for the Denver & Rio Grande Railway that he founded.16

Like the Denver & Rio Grande, the Mexican National Railway (Ferro carril Nacional Mexicano) was Palmer's initiative but largely funded by British, American, and Dutch capital. In that sense one might characterize the relationship of Britain and the United States, through Palmer and his associates, as international collaborators in the capitalist development of Mexico. The Mexican National Railway was initially paid for by stocks and bonds issued by London firms, and later assisted by Mexican subsidies.17 British capital had also been used to fund the first Mexican railroad, from Mexico to Veracruz. During the "Restored Republic" of President Juarez, discussed below, the British had difficulties in completing the Mexico City-Veracruz line, due to Mexico's uneasy diplomatic relations with countries that aided in the French intervention of the 1860s.

Nevertheless, Juarez was anxious for the railroad to be completed and he actively sought funds and Congressional approval for the completion of the line by 1873. Between 1867 and 1873 a large contingent of American railroad promoters, including Palmer, appeared on the Mexican scene, petitioning Congress for concessions to build rail lines, and particularly those connecting the U.S. and Mexico City. Palmer's ambition was to build a railroad connecting Denver to Mexico City via El Paso, Texas, and a branch line from the main line at Acambaro to Guadalajara, Colima, and the Pacific seaport of Manzanillo (Figure 1, "The Mexican Central Railroad").

With his expedition completed in May 1872, Palmer left Mexico having secured promises for the first 300 kilometers of the Mexican National Railway. After much negotiation, Palmer's company eventually won only a concession to build a line from Mexico City to Laredo, Texas in 1880 (Figure 1). The railroad was opened for business in 1888.16 Palmer's 800 mile line represented the shortest route from the Mexican capital to the United States border. Mexico eventually purchased the line in 1908.

**Mexican Travel and "Gendered Imperialism"**

Describing her Mexican travels, Kingsley repeated several topics treated in the Colorado portion of her book. She wrote about Mexican domestic life and Mexican society — especially of the wealthy landowners who hosted her party at haciendas stretching from Manzanillo to Mexico City. The contemporary political situation also provided an important theme as she wrote of both the Juarez regime and the "rebellious" pronunciatos who threatened attack of the stage coaches in which she was riding. She also devoted much attention to what she envisioned as the future economic prosperity of the country as it was linked to the development of the railway. *South by West* gained authority through several forms of support. Kingsley illustrated the text with her own drawings and interspersed her narrative with long quotations by other travelers, observers and historians such as Alexander von Humbolt, Frances Calderon del la Barca, and William H. Prescott. Her father wrote *South by West*'s Preface and brother, Maurice, lent further credentials by contributing an entire chapter to the book.19
Mary Louise Pratt, Jean Franco, and others have identified a particular narrative category, "capitalist vanguard writing," in colonial and postcolonial Latin America. As Pratt argues, "far from mystifying European expansionist designs in their writings, the capitalist vanguard tended to thematize them — indeed, consecrate them." Pratt contends that Spanish American society itself was mainly encoded as a logistical obstacle to the forward movement of the Europeans, with the journey of the capitalist-vanguard traveler-writer "allegorizing the lust for progress."

Recent work on nineteenth-century British women's travels around the world, in geography and other disciplines, has focused much attention on elite women's uneasy associations with imperialism. The question of whether and how women's writing contributed to imperialistic enterprises and geographical knowledges, both within and outside of the established traditions, has been taken up by many authors. Sara Mills, among others, argues that women writers produced particular expressions of "gendered imperial knowledge." For instance, imperial women's contribution in "saving" undeveloped and immature lands and people often had a ready rhetorical outlet in the domestic sphere, in which their civilizing mission became focused on such domains as family relations, proper hygiene, and Christian morality.

While it is important to recognize both the discursive and material constraints on the production of women's texts and the unique kinds of geographical knowledges they produced, it is equally important not to fall into essentialized categorizations about women travelers' motivations, interests, and travel experiences. "British women travelers" are as diverse as the destinations of their travels, even if they were similarly subordinated in patriarchal hierarchies of power. Moreover, as Ann Stoler and others argue, subjectivities of colonizing bourgeois Europeans were influenced by the manner in which they came in contact with people in the colonies. In that sense, the European subject/author emerged through engagement with specific peoples in specific material circumstances. Below, I draw attention to a number of ways that locations of the production of Kingsley's travel text were gendered, classed, and racialized, and how discursive subjectivities emerged from those various encounters. Rose Kingsley did not construct a singular, collective "Mexican" identity in her text. Rather, she produced a particular gendered and classed version of British imperialistic ideologies and modes of thought while in Mexico which, in the villages, on rural roads, and in homes of wealthy landowners, were made and played out in different ways, producing multiple, complex "others" in her text.

While so much of Rose Kingsley's rhetoric has all the markings of masculinist capitalist vanguardism — she frequently engaged the tropes of progress, efficiency, authority, and paternalism — what comprised the
contact zones of her travels were materially and discursively different from those of General Palmer, Maurice Kingsley, and the other men and women with whom she associated in Mexico. Thus, a reading of her text helps draw out the complex ways in which the discourses of imperialism, in its many guises, chronicled and facilitated foreign entrepreneurial missions in nineteenth-century Mexico.

Kingsley's Reconnaissance for the Mexican National Railroad

Statistical Reconnaissance

Throughout her Mexican travels, but primarily during her stagecoach journey between Manzanillo and Mexico City, Rose Kingsley reported extensively on the mineral, agricultural, industrial, and labor resources of the region and of particular haciendas she visited. She listed and described a range of economic activities. These included: the exports of Manzanillo (coffee, rice and wood); the goods entering Mexico City by canal; the annual yield of salt works near Colima; soap manufacture in Zapotlan; pottery making in Guadalajara; the workings of a sugar plantation in San Marcos; cotton and flour mills — the "very poetry of manufacturing," using machinery from England, of course — near Queretaro and other places; wheat growing near Queretaro; and the output of pulque plantations west of Mexico City. Kingsley also assessed the potential outputs of the land including: the potential for wine making in the Lerma Valley; the cost of land in comparison to potentially irrigated fields of sugar and cotton near Colima; and the value of irrigation near Guadalajara. Near Colima she stopped to consider the possibilities of pre-empting a vein of white marble, which was "quite unnoticed" by the Mexicans. Kingsley ended her book with a chapter titled, "Mexico and Its Resources," that described the topography and climate of the three "zones" of Mexico, their mineral and agricultural products, costs of labor and land, and estimates of the value of mines awaiting development.

Kingsley's narration in these passages captured the essence of capital control. One might argue that she gained legitimacy as a woman writing and traveling within the context of British and North American patriarchal social relations by positioning herself as an informed, authoritative, and patrician holder of such statistical, managerial, and "scientific" knowledge. Kingsley adopted an objective modality in her presentation of the survey and measurement results. She positioned herself as an authoritative source of information and presented data as simple fact or truth rather than as subjective observation. Many of her descriptions of Mexico appeared in what seemed to be deliberate and self-consciously anti-aesthetic, pragmatic, and economicistic language, characterized by a modernizing "industrial reverie." Even though she never explicitly disclosed the
larger purpose of her travels, nor explained whether she was hired by Palmer or took the trip at her own initiative, she clearly situated herself as an indispensable member of the reconnaissance team. Kingsley portrayed her duties along the route as essential to the success of the venture. "My special department," she wrote, "is to keep notes at each rise or halting place, of the elevation from the two barometers; besides general notes, as all the others do, of the produce and trade of each place we pass." Throughout the text Kingsley additionally counted the number of mules and wagons they passed, and the contents and quantities of goods being moved by them.39

The Politics of Prosperity
As evidenced in the epigraph to this paper, on the last page of her narrative Rose Kingsley quoted (nonspecific) Mexicans who "cried throughout the length and breadth of the country" to "give us peace and railroads." She claimed that the railroad would save the country from its two biggest problems — the inertia of the people and political disturbances. Kingsley's father in the Preface to South by West echoed this sentiment. Charles Kingsley wrote that:

The time for developing the vast resources of that country [Mexico] is surely close at hand. It possesses every earthly gift, save — for the present at least — the power of using them . . . . We must hope that her government will so conduct itself toward foreign statesmen as to re-enter honorably the comity of Nations; and toward foreign capitalists, so as to attract the wealth — American, Dutch, and English — which is ready to flow into and fertilize and pacify the whole country . . . . [I hope that] ruffianism . . . retreats before that most potent of civilizers, the railroad, as it pours in, from the distant regions of the old States, a perpetual reinforcement of the good, to drive the bad further and further into yet more desolate wilderness.30

Both daughter and father contended that massive economic development of the country would stabilize Mexico's turbulent political scene, which at the same time was largely the product of liberal reforms advocated by President Benito Juarez. Kingsley's travels in 1871-1872 occurred during the time of the "Restored Republic" (1867-1876), when attempts to establish the republican, liberal tenets of the 1857 constitution were once again resumed after the fall of Maximilian in 1867. Juarez's reforms attacked the Catholic Church, the military, the power of the economic guilds, and Indian communities. With the seizure of both church property and Indian communal lands, his regime anticipated the formation of a new class of yeoman farmers.31 However, the liberal leaders themselves and the large landowners were the only ones who could afford to buy the newly confiscated land. This period was thus marked by a large increase in the growth of the haciendas and the centralization of power in the hands of landowners and a small group of merchants and professionals. In central
Mexico, where Kingsley traveled, a well-defined conflict arose between hacienda owners, rancheros (small farmers) and village ejido, or Indian communal property holders. Hacienda owners bought out Indian lands and were supported by the power of judgeships in boundary disputes.\textsuperscript{32}

Within this political climate, the patriarchal and influential voice of Charles Kingsley in the Preface to the volume lent validity and legitimacy to the views of his daughter. He explicitly gender-coded Mexico as feminine and capital as masculine (to "fertilize and pacify"), a trope frequently employed in the justification of British imperial expansionism, particularly in the colonies where passive and active principles came to stand for national or racial difference itself.\textsuperscript{33} Charles' liberal position on social and economic progress leading from natural selection helps bring into focus his statements on the responsibilities of western specialists in the "civilizing" of Mexico. Associating "peace" with railroads demonstrated the civilizing mission of British and American capital in its full rhetorical bloom: increased commercialization would bring about nothing less than political stability of the governing party.

Rose's rhetoric as she traveled amidst the political unrest must be understood within the context of the immediate justification that she and her fellow travelers sought for the development of the Mexican railroad, as well as the specific representational constructs of Mexican society on which that development depended. Rose's statement that "everywhere as yet the idea of a railroad has been received with acclamation" was undoubtedly influenced by the wealthy Germans who hosted her in Guadalajara, as well as the political and military elite who surrounded her.\textsuperscript{34} Many of them would likely have shared the aspirations of the capitalist vanguard.

Thus, Rose Kingsley's position on the development of Mexico's railroads and resources was undoubtedly as much influenced by the Mexican elite's attempts to consolidate their power and construct new hegemonies for themselves under the liberal reforms, as it was by the personal stake Kingsley's friends and family might have had in it. Rose herself, of course, as a woman, would not have had the legal economic or political rights to personally gain from such capitalist endeavors. Through her family's class membership, however, she would have been assured of the benefits accruing from them.\textsuperscript{35} This raises the question of who, then, Kingsley came to encode as "inert" and in need of European redemption. To answer this it is necessary to take a closer look at the social relations inherent in many contact zones of Kingsley's travels. In the remainder of the essay I explore how Kingsley's "politics of difference" was produced out of encounters with heterogeneous numbers of Mexican people, encounters which ultimately enabled her to deploy the message that the construction of the railroad was necessary to save Mexico from its political maelstrom.
Gendered and Racialized Divisions of Labor

Rose Kingsley often claimed that Mexicans in general suffered from inertia, and were apathetic and politically troubled. The tropes she adopted served to classify Mexicans as logistical obstacles to the forward movement of European and American capitalists in Mexico. Yet, Kingsley encountered and wrote about diverse individuals and groups of Mexicans during her travels, including: governmental dignitaries, political "rebels," wealthy landowners, field and factory workers, Catholic priests, rural Indians, tradespeople, inn keepers, servants, and mule drivers. She related conversations with some of her hosts, and lengthily quoted others. Yet the voices of many people she described — unnamed villagers, workers and beggars — remained silent in her text. Certain stereotypes common in her travel narrative that I discuss below were undermined by a distinct range of representations of Mexican people in highly gendered, classed, and racialized ways that emerged out of different social-spatial contexts.

Rose Kingsley often attributed Mexico’s underdevelopment to the laziness and incompetence of its people. "In Mexico," she said, "people always seem to have time." As Skeels notes, the image of Mexicans as dirty, lazy, dishonest, lecherous, and politically unstable was a "familiar refrain in American images of its southern neighbor" in the early decades of the twentieth century, constructed as the negative half of the United States/Mexico opposition. Such rhetoric about the lower classes was also common, of course, among the nineteenth-century bourgeois who employed the principles of social Darwinism to serve the interests of British empire building. In this perspective, social stratification generally arose out of inherited genetic qualities. However, Kingsley represented only particular groups of Mexicans as lazy and incompetent: mestizo and Indian males of the "lower orders." Traveling from 20 March to 1 May 1872, through the mountains, canyons, and valleys between Manzanillo and Mexico City, Kingsley and her party stopped at many small villages and haciendas to eat, change mules, and sleep for the night. In many of the villages, Kingsley described groups of men resting and gossiping under trees. She concluded that the men of Mexico, especially the ones "more Indian than Spanish," were inefficient in their agricultural practices and lazy in general. She asserted that "rather than rid their country of robbers they laze around."

Kingsley further portrayed servants, mule drivers, guards and other workers throughout the journey as untrustworthy, "intensely stupid," and incompetent. She claimed that one driver, while "hideously moaning," took special pleasure in driving over stumps just to annoy passengers. She likewise depicted the guards who accompanied their stagecoaches as untrustworthy and cruel. After witnessing their gratuitous shooting of a
dog, Kingsley declared that she was more afraid of her guards than the robbers from whom they supposedly were protecting her. While male servants were also depicted as intensely stupid people who "contrived" to misunderstand foreigners, Kingsley had more positive things to say about servants who gave her gifts or who displayed courteous and chivalrous behavior. "I really believe," she said of one "old soldier of the lower orders," that "it is a pleasure to them to be asked to do one any little favour." She portrayed mill and factory workers at haciendas along the route as beasts of burden. They were happy, healthy, and hard-working only if the owners "kept an eye on them."

These excerpts point to a number of social sites through which Kingsley and the Mexican men of the "lower orders" in the villages clashed along the lines of gender, class, and racial difference. Her rhetoric reinforced the superiority of one type of (white) hegemonic masculinity defined by the strictures of manliness, chivalry, rationality, exploitation, and efficient use of resources. Kingsley received indications of potential "civilization," such as servants' chivalry, appreciatively. As Pratt observes, the capitalist vanguard's task was to ideologically "invent" Latin America as backward and neglected, and encode its non-capitalist physical and cultural landscapes and societies as manifestly in need of the rationalized exploitation that Europeans bring. Characteristics of laziness, incompetence, stupidity, and untrustworthiness, then, ensured the need of foreign intervention to turn village men — particularly those "more Indian than Spanish" — into productive commercial workers. Social evolution was possible as long as the "missionary" work of capitalism was allowed to progress unimpeded.

Kingsley's depictions of men of the rural villages can also be understood as "distortions" of larger political-economic changes taking place in Mexico at the time of her reconnaissance trip. Assertions that the men would "laze around" rather than rid their country of robbers must be viewed in relation to both Kingsley's anti-Catholic politics and inattention to the effects of liberal reforms. Those reforms introduced under the regime of President Juarez greatly reduced the land holdings of small farmers and Indians as well as the Catholic Church. At the beginning of her narrative, Kingsley explained that her party took the particular route they did because "for various reasons it must be reconnoitered." However, "the only fear for this route," she continued, was that "we may be troubled by bands of robbers on the road." The "robbers," many of whom were organized under Porfirio Diaz (who had just lost the election to Juarez in 1871 but would replace him in 1876), were the pronunciados, men who "pronounced against" the government and its reforms. As Sinkin and Hobsbawm each point out, many of these "bandits," "robbers," and "rebels"
would likely have been Indian and mestizo men who left their villages to
fight displacement by the liberal reforms.48

Throughout her Mexican travels Kingsley argued that the country
was "overrun with guerrilla bands" who were levying taxes on innocent
hacienda owners and confiscating food and goods if they did not pay. She
claimed that the rebels used politics simply as an "excuse" for robbery.49
She traveled amidst much of the fighting, and since stagecoaches were
often the targets of attacks, she focused a good deal of attention on her
party's preparations for such attacks, the numbers of guards employed,
the local political situations in areas through which they passed, and
actual or potential encounters with "robbers." She reported that the "revo-
lutionists" were "giving some trouble" between Colima and Guadalajara
and had cut the telegraph lines there.50 Kingsley also recorded the number
of arms and guards that constituted her own traveling party, noting for
instance that twenty-eight guards accompanied them to Guadalajara.51
She personally encountered a group of pronunciados only once. Claiming
her party had been watched since the coast, Kingsley described a confron-
tation that came near Seyula. These men, "a despicable set of ruffians, in
any kind of dress over military trousers, wretchedly armed with old muzz-
le-loading carbines, and all drunk" confiscated all of her party's rifles.52

Kingsley's encounter with this band of pronunciados further illustrates
the links between her gender and class politics. She completely juxtaposed
a range of representations of these men, highlighting their leader's chival-
rousness and civility but referring to his underlings as a "despicable set of
ruffians" who were all drunk. Kingsley referred to the leader as "major,"
quoted him as asking for "permission" to search their coach for arms, and
described how he was disarmingly "embarrassed" to be pilfering their
rifles. She noted that he magnanimously promised to accompany their
coach to his superior's headquarters to ask for the rifles back (they were
not returned).53 So it is the leader alone whose chivalrous, cultivated
(although romanticized) manhood appears equal to Kingsley's discerning,
genteel Englishness. This represents a rhetorical move that can best be
understood as favorably positioning Kingsley and other capitalist van-
guards with the future regimes of power under which Palmer's railroad
would actually be built. It was men such as the major in this scene who
were to become the heirs of foreign investments in the railroad when Diaz
finally took power in 1876. Foreign and Mexican capital together met the
nationalistic agenda of the power elite with the "ruffian" rebels only serv-
ing to obstruct "progress."

Kingsley's discursive alignment with Juárez's reforms and vehement
anti-Catholicism also likely grew out of her Protestant background and
participation in the affairs of the Anglican Church. The act of privatizing
Catholic Church and corporate property would ultimately increase
foreign commerce in Mexico. Thus, Kingsley’s Protestant mission and her
capitalistic one converge in the act of foreign “salvation” of Mexico, some-
thing about which Charles Kingsley and many other influential social
commentators of the time had much to say.\textsuperscript{54}

Rose Kingsley’s depictions of lazy or untrustworthy men of the rural
villages must also be considered within the larger Victorian context of
relations between the sexes. She often portrayed women of the rural vil-
lages in a more positive light than the men. While the women were
engaged in productive work, the men “lazed about.” Village women typi-
cally appear in Kingsley’s text preparing and serving meals, making tex-
tiles or pottery, picking garden vegetables, or accomplishing a wide
variety of other domestic tasks.\textsuperscript{55} Figure 2 is among Kingsley’s drawings in
\textit{South by West}. Kingsley reported on the contents, quality, and size of prac-
tically every meal she ate and every bed she slept in during her journey.
Her focus on food and accommodations and the women who were
responsible for them elicited both complimentary and derogatory
responses. She described simple meals of beans and tortillas as excellent
and the Mexican chocolate and coffee as delicious yet recalled crying over
one particularly “wretched” meal and becoming ill from some eggs fried
in candle grease.\textsuperscript{56}

Kingsley’s attention to domestic matters can be easily understood as
stemming from women’s material and discursive positioning that gave
them “legitimate” access to insights centered in the female experience of
the home, family, manners and fashions. In addition, her recurring obses-
sion with cleanliness circulated widely among nineteenth-century bour-
geois Europeans and represented, as McClintock argues, a “God-given
sign of Britain’s evolutionary superiority.”\textsuperscript{57} The rhetoric of domestic
cleanliness would find an easy outlet in the work of women writers such
as Rose Kingsley whose own racial and national rankings measured
progress and civilization at least partly within the domestic realm.

Furthermore, Kingsley’s constructions of Mexican village women’s
productive labor juxtaposed to men’s idleness must be viewed in relation
to its affront to the properly gendered division of labor within the bour-
geois Victorian household. Earlier in her travelogue, Kingsley complained
that Ute Indian women of Colorado seemed to be virtual slaves to their
husbands. They appeared to perform all of the work of the tribe including
the hauling of heavy loads while the men walked alongside them carrying
no loads except their guns and bows.\textsuperscript{58} Not comprehending that carrying
the loads meant ownership of the dwelling and its contents, and therefore
power and prestige to the Ute women,\textsuperscript{59} Kingsley portrayed these women
as an affront to the pious, protected, and domestic ideal of femininity
embedded in British Victorian patriarchal discourse. While bourgeois men
were judged by their success at entering the public commercial sphere, the
Figure 2. "Woman making Tortillas" in Rose Kingsley's *South by West* (London: W. Ibister & Company, 1874), 187.
women proved the success of their men by becoming economically idle and therefore feminine.\textsuperscript{60}

Kingsley’s discursive move to compare Ute society to some transparent norm of civilized gender relations worked in a similar way to her discussions of Mexican villages. Though far from economically idle, the Mexican women were portrayed as perhaps less transgressive to bourgeois women’s proper roles because their work was situated within the domestic realm. These Mexican women’s labor compared to that of servants’ in a bourgeois household. In contrast, both Ute and Mexican men were judged by Kingsley as economically and socially unproductive, thereby unable to approximate western ideals of the civilized woman whose husband pays for maids. The voice of the capitalist vanguard thus became accessible to women traveling within an imperial context. The dual outcome for Kingsley was to inscribe herself in the text as a bourgeois rational capitalist through her implicit identification as a standard-bearing English lady.

This rhetorical maneuver, to measure the Mexican need for capital-improving modes of work based on the gendered division of labor, reversed itself when Kingsley described the wealthy landowners of the \textit{haciendas} who hosted her from Manzanillo to Mexico City. Kingsley moved considerably within elite Mexican society throughout her journey, meeting and being hosted by wealthy landowners, political dignitaries such as the president,\textsuperscript{61} military men in high positions including Porfirio Diaz himself,\textsuperscript{62} and professionals, including "intelligent" and "gentlemen-like" librarians and museum curators.\textsuperscript{63} These men of means, but especially the wealthy \textit{hacienda} owners, received quite different treatment in her text than the men of the lower classes, disrupting a stereotyped response to Mexican people in her text. Because these men productively maximized the potential of capital accumulation and thus shared the ideals of the American and British capitalist vanguard — partly, one would expect, by forming partnerships with entrepreneurs such as William Palmer — they received praise and affirmation in Kingsley’s narrative.

She referred to Señor Don Juan F.H. in Colima, owner of a large house and fruit orchard, as "dear old Don Juan" who showed her much kindness and hospitality and "who really seem[ed] to think no trouble too great if it add[ed] to his guests’ enjoyment."\textsuperscript{64} Staying at the home of the wealthy landowner Don Ignacio Lagos, west of Colima, Kingsley reported that:

Don Ignacio gave us plenty of information about the country and its products. He owns a large tract of land; and grows sugar, coffee, and rice on it. His handsome wife . . . showed us after breakfast some of her lacework and embroidery, for which the women in this State are famous . . . [it is] much like Greek lace . . . worthy of French work.\textsuperscript{65}
Another of her hosts, Don Mauricio G., who showed flawless civility and kindness by placing his whole house at their disposal, was an owner of the large San Marcos sugar plantation. Kingsley explained that the plantation covered 22,000 acres, employed 300 people in the sugarworks and in the fields, and produced 3,000 barrels of rum and 550,000 pounds of sugar each year. The lives of such men and their families closely approximated the ideal Anglo-European bourgeois order. As the men accumulated more capital, their wives became increasingly removed from the domestic tasks which servants performed. Kingsley identifies with Don Ignacio’s and Don Mauricio’s wives and daughters who, like her, had servants to fulfill domestic duties, thus affording them time for more leisureed-class work such as embroidery, lace-making, or writing travel books.

Kingsley praised these men and women not only for their refined hospitality, which increased leisure time allowed, but also for their industry and resourcefulness. Yet she also criticized Mexican men of the lower classes for their backwardness, indolence, and failure to properly exploit resources. Kingsley’s rhetoric obviously highlighted the similar class interests she shared with many of the bourgeois Mexican men and women, a social group that she did not distinguish by racial difference in her writings. While a small number of them were likely Spanish "Creole," by the middle of the nineteenth century a sizable mestizo population existed among the educated, landowning elite and political leaders. President Juárez himself was Indian. Racial difference was therefore defined by class and geographical difference for Kingsley. Whereas she described the racial make-up and mixing of Spanish and Indian blood for the "idle" village men, she avoided mention of the racial make-up of the wealthy *hacienda* owners. This may be partly explained by the fact that in Spanish America, racial difference was almost always "washed out" by economic prowess. This might also be explained by Kingsley’s apparent desire to reserve discussion of racial difference only for instances of commercial "failure."

**Concluding Comments**

In this essay I have drawn attention to a region of Britain’s "informal empire" and the narrative rhetorics that sustained foreign capitalist intervention there. Rose Kingsley’s imperial geography deployed the narrative rhetoric of American and British capital vanguards in Mexico that was constituted through particular expressions of class, gender, and racial difference. Among other things I have shown is that Rose Kingsley justified the need of foreign business intervention in Mexico through her pejorative representations of lower class "lazy" Mexican men and their hard-laboring female counterparts. To Kingsley, these people clearly did not meet the
standards of proper gender relations found in bourgeois households — households which "proved" their capitalist productivity partly through women's idleness.

Rose Kingsley's efforts toward helping a U.S. railroad company link the United States and Mexico City should be made explicit. This essay has drawn attention to how one member of an influential English family participated in and justified American and British imperial expansion in nineteenth-century Mexico. The lasting impact of such reconnaissance trips for the railroad cannot be understated. The rhetoric of Rose Kingsley was in keeping with that of many Mexican political leaders of the time, who were interested in industrializing the country and attracting foreign wealth. These included leaders on either end of the political spectrum. President Porfirio Díaz asserted that the railway "played a great part in the peace of Mexico," and railroad building and industrialization were goals of his thirty-year dictatorial regime. By 1908 Mexico acquired the rights to its railroads from British and American companies, with Díaz's científicos regulating their operation in the hopes of keeping Mexico's control over its economy and resources at home while continuing to attract foreign capital. Not incidentally though, the railroads were also instrumental in Díaz's eventual overthrow as they facilitated the Mexican Revolution that began in 1910.

Considering that the Mexican railroad network established by 1898 remains basically unchanged today, one might reflect on how early U.S. and British investments in Mexican railroads helped set the stage for the uneven trade practices between the countries today, particularly between the U.S. and Mexico. Eighty-three percent of U.S. investments during Díaz's regime were in rails and mining, and the tonnage carried by Mexican railroads increased a hundredfold between 1873 and 1910. New links between cities and outlying areas were established, the shipping of raw materials to industries greatly expanded domestic markets for finished goods, and the opening of new agricultural lands greatly increased land values. The U.S. played a dominant part in the rapid economic development of Mexico between 1867 and 1911, during which time it had secured more of Mexico's trade than all of the European nations together. The railroad links to the U.S. also enabled Mexican labor migrations northward, allowed easier U.S. and other foreign access to Mexican resources and goods, and consolidated U.S. and other foreign investment and landholdings in Mexico. British and American capitalist ventures such as the reconnoitering and building of the Mexican railroad helped facilitate what is today one of the most, if not the most, economically imbalanced border relationships on the face of the globe.
Acknowledgments

This paper formed part of my talk at the Inaugural International Conference of Critical Geographers in Vancouver, British Columbia in August 1997. My thanks to participants in the session "Histories and Geographies of the Colonial Present" for their helpful feedback on it. Thanks also to Bonnie Poteet, Judith Kenny, Lawrence Berg, Cheryl McEwan, George Jenks, Esther Allen, and three anonymous referees for their advice on previous drafts — especially to Bonnie for her generously close reading of the manuscript. This research was helped along by a summer grant from the Race/Gender Resource Center of Bucknell University.

Notes

1. Rose Kingsley, South by West or Winter in the Rocky Mountains and Spring in Mexico (London: W. Isbister & Co., 1874), 411. South by West is divided roughly in half between the United States portion of Kingsley’s journey (primarily Colorado) and the portion of her travels in Mexico. I discuss only her travels in Mexico in this paper. For discussion of the section on Colorado see Karen M. Morin, “Gender, Imperialism, and the Western American Landscapes of Victorian Women Travelers, 1874-1897,” (Ph.D. diss., University of Nebraska-Lincoln, 1996); and Karen M. Morin, “British Women Travellers and Constructions of Racial Difference Across the Nineteenth Century American West,” Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers 23 (1998): 311-330.

2. Kingsley’s clerical and literary family included her father, Charles Kingsley – chaplain to Queen Victoria (1859), professor of modern history at Cambridge (1860-1869), and Canon of Westminister (1873). Her younger cousin Mary Kingsley became the popular Victorian traveler best known for her two books about colonial Africa: Travels in West Africa (1897) and West African Studies (1899). According to Cheryl McEwan, the cousins were “quite close by all accounts” (personal correspondences with author, May 1993 and May 1998).


4. Kingsley, South by West, 189, 192, 249, 409-411.

5. Ibid.


11. These include: Colonel Bourne’s Notes on the State of Sonora and Sinaloa (1825); George Francis Lyon’s Residence in Mexico, 1826: Diary of a Tour with a Stay in the Republic of Mexico;
Henry George Ward's (the first British ambassador to independent Mexico) *Mexico in 1827*; and George F. Ruxton's *Adventures in Mexico* (1846). Perhaps the best known of early British women's published travel accounts of Mexico is Frances E. Calderon de la Barca's classic *Life in Mexico, during a Residence of Two Years in that Country* (1843). Calderon was the Scottish wife of the first Spanish ambassador to Mexico, a woman whom Rose Kingsley quoted on Spanish colonial history. Lady Emmeline Stuart Wortley and her twelve-year-old daughter Victoria also wrote separate accounts of Mexico during the mid-nineteenth century, in *Travels in the United States, North America, Caribbean, and Peru during 1849 and 1850* (1851), and *A Young Traveller’s Journal of a Tour in North and South America During the Year 1850* (1852). When the railroad lines made the western and southwestern portions of the United States more accessible to foreign travelers, Mexico was also added to the itineraries of many Britons on “grand tours” of North America later in the century. These include Baroness Winifred Howard of Glossop, who traveled to North America with her brother in 1894, producing *Journal of a Tour in the United States, Canada and Mexico* (1897), Mrs. E.H. Carbutt's *Five Months' Fine Weather in Canada, Western United States, and Mexico* (1889), and of course the text by Rose Kingsley (1874). A published account of an Englishwoman in Guanajuato in the late-nineteenth century can also be found in Annie Poole's *Mexicans at Home in the Interior* (1884).

12. Her best known work, *The Order of St. John of Jerusalem (Past and Present)* (1918) is a history of Malta in the Middle Ages.

13. Charles Kingsley was one of England's first churchmen to support Darwin's theories and to seek reconciliation between modern science and Christian doctrine. As such, he was known for his "Christian progressivism" through social programs such as improved education and sanitation. Widely read in England, his novel *Water Babies* (1863) was inspired by his thoughts on evolution. He also wrote *American Notes: Letters from a Lecture Tour* (rpt. 1958) and *Westward Ho!* (1855), an anti-Catholic adventure set in the Elizabethan period.

14. Maurice Kingsley worked as a secretary for the railway company, taking an active role during her four month visit, Rose helped Maurice keep books for the railway company writing out agreements for lots and memberships. See R. Ahearn, *Westward the Briton* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1962), 194.

15. Ibid., 41, 49, 61-62, 86, 232, 261, 270. While General Palmer was associated with the railway, Mrs. P. had started a school in Colorado for colonialists' children. Rose apparently already knew the couple before meeting them in Colorado. Nowhere in the text does Rose explicitly name Palmer as anyone other than "General P," although there is no doubt as to the General's identity. Rose made many references to visiting Palmer's acclaimed home in Glen Eyrie, near Colorado Springs, and she lived in accommodations provided by the Denver & Rio Grande Railway Company throughout her stay in Colorado. Furthermore, the dates and route of her travels in Mexico coincide precisely with Palmer's. See also David M. Pletcher, *Rails, Mines, and Progress: Seven American Promoters in Mexico, 1867-1911* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1958), 47-50.

16. As Colorado was home to many wealthy British health seekers and investors, titled remittance men and retired colonels, with the help of them, Palmer's million-dollar bond issue to inaugurate his Colorado railroad succeeded with $700,000 from England and $300,000 from a construction company in his native Philadelphia. His Denver & Rio Grande Railway opened for business in 1871, and was eventually extended from Denver to Ogden, Utah, in 1884. See Lucius Beebe and Charles Clegg, *Narrow Gauge in the Rockies* (Berkeley: Howell-North, 1958). As Beebe and Clegg assert, Palmer had an admiration for all things English, to the extent that his Colorado Springs home, which Rose Kingsley visited many times, was modeled after the home of the Duke of Marlborough.


19. Maurice Kingsley contributed *South by West*'s chapter 23, titled: "A Reconnaissance in the Southern Tierra Caliente," 357-381.
20. Pratt, *Imperial Eyes*, 131-136, 146-155; See Pratt’s reference to Franco’s work, 149, 243; Pratt focuses here on European travel literature about South America in the early decades of the nineteenth century. Interestingly, though, Alexander von Humboldt’s *Political Essays on Mexico*, produced during his year there in 1803-1804, does not seem to fit the narrative conventions of capital vanguardism. Pratt reports that von Humboldt spent most of his time in Mexico City, among scholars and in libraries and among scientific communities, the outcome of which was a representation of Mexico as ahistorical, cultivated antiquity, and as both primal culture and nature.

21. Ibid., 148.


24. Kingsley, *South by West*, 188, 192, 204, 213-214, 222, 240, 245, 268-269, 295, 384. She would have gone to Queretaro and Guanajuato as important Mexican mining centers, although her travels took place after the most prodigious mining stage in these areas.

25. Ibid., 195, 209, 251, 258, 279.

26. Ibid., 195.

27. Ibid., 399-411. The three zones are the *Tierra Caliente*, or Torrid Zone; the *Tierra Templada*, or Temperate Zone; and the *Tierra Fría*, or Cold Zone. This material duplicates the same type of information Kingsley provided on Colorado’s resources.

28. After Jean Franco, as quoted in Pratt, *Imperial Eyes*, 149.


30. Ibid., vii-ix.


33. Young, *Colonial Desire*, 159-182.


37. Ibid., 315, 401-402.

39. This intersected with Victorian patriarchy, which postulated that women's biological functions limited their intellectual ones, as well as "scientific racism," which inferred social and moral attributes from physical traits such as cranial capacity, skin color, and facial features. The "white man's burden" of imperialism found literary expression in the works of many authors of the day, including those of Charles Kingsley. See Helen Callaway, *Gender, Culture and Empire: European Women in Colonial Nigeria* (London: MacMillan Press, 1987); and Greta Jones, *Social Darwinism and English Thought: The Interaction Between Biological and Society Theory* (Brighton: Harvester Press, 1980).

40. Kingsley, *South by West*, 185, 199, 234.
41. Ibid., 189, 191-192, 206, 208.
42. Ibid., 273-274.
43. Ibid., 212-213, 296, 323, 355.
44. Ibid., 204, 270.
45. Pratt, *Imperial Eyes*.
47. Ibid., 302.
50. Ibid. Her entries also referred to an attack on Colima the day after she left; that the "revolution had broken out" near Queretaro; that pronunciados were advancing from all sides at Zapotalan; and, that government troops were marching through Seyula and from the west.
51. Ibid., 194, 206, 217-218, 224, 228-229.
52. Ibid., 224-226. Kingsley lengthily quoted a letter from her brother about the engineering party's encounter with "bandits" as well (342-343). In this skirmish, shooting broke out, several men were killed, and General Palmer was grazed by a bullet (also see Fletcher, *Rails, Mines, and Progress*, 50).
53. Ibid.
54. Rose had traveled to North America as an official representative of the Church of England. In Mexico, Rose met only one Catholic priest she admired, a German who had been Maximilian's confessor (297), but the rest were vain (336); engaged mindlessly in "revolting" practices such as confession (236); and were criminals, themselves fighting against the liberal reforms, such as in Penjamo (255). She reported that they "scowled" at her on numerous occasions for her own religious orientation (290, 329); were "thieves" who stole the common people's money for the building of "useless" buildings, while the people's huts were not fit for pigs (261, 304); and were frauds (300). Kingsley declared that the Virgin of Guadalupe was a "fraudulent," "disgusting," and "absurd" story. Rose's deep Anglican roots, anti-Catholicism, and Christian progressivism can be traced to her father's works, as well as to the works of other social theorists. See Max Weber's *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (London: Routledge, 1996).
55. Ibid., 187-188, 248, 255, 279.
56. Ibid., 187-188, 193, 255, 248, 216, 256.
58. Kingsley, *South by West*, 134; see Morin, "British Women Travellers."
women's heavy labor was the result of a loss of power and redefinition of labor relations by men. Gerda Lerner, *The Creation of Patriarchy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986).

60. Hall, *White, Male and Middle Class*, 62-63. But for a different view on the importance of these women's roles as household employers and therefore instruments of class management see, Elizabeth Langland, *Nobody's Angels: Middle-Class Women and Domestic Ideology in Victorian Culture* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1995), 8-11.


62. Ibid., 183. On the ship from San Francisco to Manzanillo, Kingsley reported that she met "two Mexican gentlemen, who say they are merchants traveling for a house in Guadalajara" (183), one of whom appears in a footnote as Don Porfirio Diaz, "the leader of the Revolution." She said that the men asked to join their party as far as Colima, which was agreed to, since "two more armed men may be an advantage to our little party." Beyond reporting that the "Revolution . . . flamed up more fiercely than ever" upon Diaz's return to Mexico, Kingsley made no further mention of either of the two men.

63. Ibid., 317, 321, 326, 331, 350.

64. Ibid., 197, 203.

65. Ibid., 192-194.


68. L. Poteet, personal correspondences with author, November-December 1998; Young, *Colonial Desire*.


